



FEMA

NEWS RELEASE STATE/FEDERAL DISASTER FIELD OFFICE JOINT INFORMATION CENTER



Contact: Rob Harper, WEMD (425) 290-4129
Diana Seifert, FEMA (425) 290-4132
Richard Jenkins, SBA (916) 566-7240

December 2, 2003
DR1499: PR028

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

FEMA REGISTRATION/HELPLINE OPERATIONAL HOURS CHANGE

EVERETT, WA – The Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Registration and Helpline days of operation have changed to Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., according to Anthony Russell, the FEMA official in charge of long-term disaster recovery.

The toll-free Registration/Helpline number, **1-800-621-FEMA (3362)**, is available for residents of Washington's 15 disaster-declared counties who suffered damage during the severe storms and flooding of October 15 - 23, 2003. Those with speech or hearing impairments should call **TTY 1-800-462-7585**.

In addition to providing a way to register for disaster assistance, the phone number is also available for people who have registered and want to check on the status of or update their application.

Diane R. Offord, the state official in charge of recovery, said, "The Registration/Helpline number is an excellent way to get answers to questions about what disaster aid may be available to applicants. There are a variety of federal and state programs available to eligible storm victims."

The 15 Washington counties declared eligible for federal and state disaster assistance are Chelan, Clallam, Grays Harbor, Island, Jefferson, King, Kitsap, Mason, Okanogan, Pierce, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, Thurston and Whatcom.

On March 1, 2003, FEMA became part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. FEMA's continuing mission within the new department is to lead the effort to prepare the nation for all hazards and effectively manage federal response and recovery efforts following any national incident. FEMA also initiates proactive mitigation activities, trains first responders, and manages the National Flood Insurance Program and the U.S. Fire Administration.

###

Note to Editors: Disaster information is available on FEMA's World Wide Web at <http://www.fema.gov> or the Washington Emergency Management Division at <http://emd.wa.gov>